

## **SECTION ONE**

# Getting Started

**P**lanning for your first HHW collection must begin very early—as long as 6 to 18 months before a projected HHW collection date. See box for a sample timeline for planning the HHW collection. In addition, the case studies presented in Section 11 describe how two communities successfully planned HHW collection days.

## Define Roles and Responsibilities

Although one person can be the catalyst for beginning a community program, the success of the program depends on the involvement of a variety of individuals and organizations. A key initial step in planning the program is identifying who should be involved and defining their roles and responsibilities.

## The Planning Committee

The most important step in beginning a program is enlisting a core group of people who can assemble the needed resources and manage the program. The planning committee can perform or oversee many different functions, such as:

- Providing background information.
- Setting policy and goals.
- Obtaining funding and other resources.
- Championing the program in the community.
- Supervising a sponsor.

The process of forming a planning committee can begin at a meeting of community officials and interested members of the public where they can discuss instituting a HHW management program. Telephoning influential community members and placing announcements in the local media can help boost attendance at the meeting.

If sufficient support for a program exists, the people gathered can choose a program coordinator, form a planning committee and subcommittees, and begin planning the program. The planning committee usually includes solid waste, health, public safety, and planning officials; legislators; members of

citizen groups; and representatives from local business and industry.

## The HHW Program Sponsor

Every community HHW management program needs a sponsor or co-sponsors. Usually the sponsor is a government agency, but some programs are sponsored by a civic organization or a business. The sponsor's role includes:

- Managing and funding all aspects of the program.
- Developing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and contracts with a licensed hazardous waste contractor.
- Recruiting, managing, and delegating responsibilities to supporting agencies and staff.
- Involving community leaders and residents in planning and implementing the program.

## The Hazardous Waste Firm

Most communities contract with a qualified hazardous waste firm that handles the HHW at the collection site and brings it to a hazardous waste treatment storage, and disposal facility (TSDF). If you hire a hazardous waste contractor to handle the HHW collection, be sure to choose a firm or firms licensed to store, transport and dispose of HHW according to federal and state requirements. Hazardous waste contractors might not need to be fully licensed (see Appendix A) to perform the duties your contract requires. Licensing, however, helps to ensure that the contractor is experienced. The roles of the

contractor are spelled out in the contract and can include:

- Providing necessary materials and equipment.
- Properly training its collection staff.
- Obtaining necessary insurance.
- Consulting with the program planners about waste management methods to be used.
- Identifying appropriate hazardous waste TSDFs.

- Providing necessary services on collection day, such as unloading wastes from vehicles; screening, packaging, testing, and labeling wastes; supervising volunteer personnel; and hauling and disposing of the waste.
- Complying with all applicable federal, state, and local requirements.
- Submitting post-collection reports.

Information on selecting a contractor is provided in Section 6.

## HHW Collection Program Timeline

### 6 to 18 Months before Collection

- Establish planning committee
- Identify program goals
- Select program sponsor and cosponsors
- Contact environmental regulatory agencies
- Begin designing education program
- Initiate community outreach
- Research laws, regulations, and guidelines
- Determine collection methods
- Set tentative collection date(s)
- Select potential sites
- Initiate public education program
- Determine targeted wastes/excluded wastes/generators
- Estimate costs
- Secure funding
- Issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

### to 8 Months before Collection

- Evaluate RFP submissions
- Interview contractors
- Select contractor
- Identify markets for reusable and recyclable HHW
- Involve emergency services (fire, police, etc.)
- Begin publicizing collection program
- Obtain permits

### 6 to 12 Weeks before Collection

- Design site layout and draw site plan
- Develop collection day procedures/written plan

- Identify/order equipment
- Arrange disposal and recycling of nonhazardous material brought in
- Continue education and intensify publicity efforts
- Solicit volunteers
- Acquire insurance
- Develop collection day surveys

### 0 to 6 Weeks before Collection

- Receive equipment and supplies
- Conduct worker training/safety training
- Complete publicity campaign
- Confirm police/emergency service involvement

### Collection Day

- Set up site
- Orient community staff and volunteers
- Complete participant questionnaires
- Receive, package, and ship HHW
- Clean up site

### Post-Collection Day

- Tabulate survey responses
- Evaluate collection/public education results
- Publicize results
- Thank participants and volunteers through the media
- Write summary report
- Prepare for future events

## Involve the Community

Community involvement is critical to the success of a HHW management program. Government agencies, community groups, local legislators, businesses, industries, and concerned citizens should be involved from the start. They can promote the HHW program in a number of ways:

### Building acceptance for the program

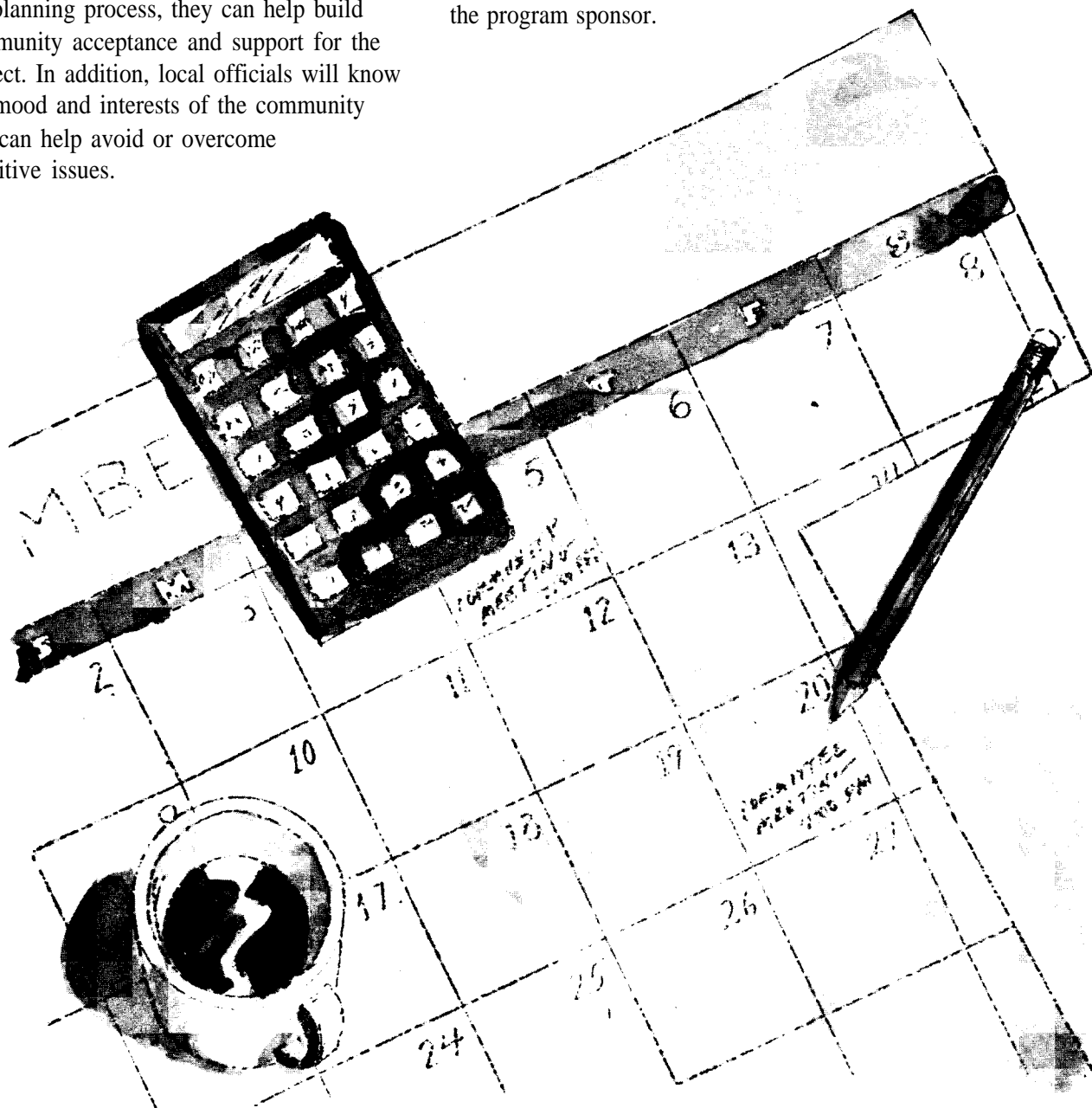
If key community leaders participate in the planning process, they can help build community acceptance and support for the project. In addition, local officials will know the mood and interests of the community and can help avoid or overcome sensitive issues.

### Developing a sense of community 'ownership'

People involved in planning and implementing a project will feel that the program belongs to them. Community ownership helps to ensure greater participation on collection day as well as community pride about the outcome of the event.

### Providing community assistance

Volunteer groups and residents often can contribute expertise or resources and can share the responsibilities of planning and implementing the program with the program sponsor.



Providing leadership on HHW issues

The more community leaders learn about managing and reducing HHW, the more likely they will be to support an ongoing or permanent program. Many community leaders also will alter their buying and disposal practices, becoming examples for the community.

## Assemble the Facts

Members of the planning committee should conduct background research during the program's early planning stages. At least a month or two is needed to acquire the information necessary to plan the program and inform the community. This research can be conducted by planning committee members, who can provide important information in their own areas of expertise:

- **Health department officials** can provide technical data (such as material safety data sheets) about specific hazardous materials.
- **Police and safety officials** can provide procedures for handling materials and for preventing and managing accidents (such as site selection procedures and traffic management).
- **Legislators and public officials** can provide relevant regulations and guidelines.
- **Public interest groups** can provide site selection considerations, media contacts, informational materials, and procedures for volunteer recruitment.
- **Businesses** can provide information about sources of funding and material and equipment donations.
- **Educators** can provide curricula and audiovisual materials.

It is essential that the sponsor and the planning committee learn about the federal, state, and local regulations that apply to their HHW management program as well as the steps they can take to minimize liability. It is important to note that state regulations

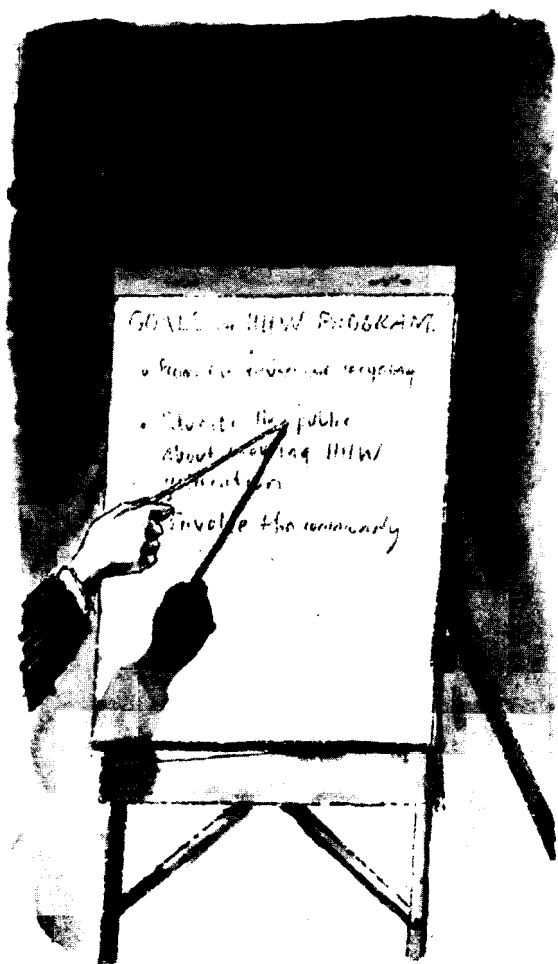
might be more stringent than federal hazardous waste management regulations. For example, states might require HHW collection programs to obtain operating permits. Local governments also might have applicable requirements, such as zoning laws or building codes. These issues are discussed in Section 4 and Appendix A. The sponsor or planning committee should review current literature, attend conferences or workshops about managing HHW, if possible, and contact the state hazardous waste management agency, the EPA regional office, and local agencies (see Appendix B).

It is also important to anticipate the types of wastes to be collected, since different types of HHW present different transport and handling requirements. The type of accumulated HHW is strongly influenced by whether the community is in an urban, suburban, rural, or agricultural area. For example, an agricultural area might generate large quantities of pesticides. Pesticides are among the most expensive wastes to dispose of. HHW programs in rural or agricultural areas, therefore, might be more expensive than programs in urban or suburban areas. Collection programs in environmentally proactive communities usually will have higher participation and collection rates than programs in less environmentally active communities.

## Establish Goals

Every HHW management program needs clear, realistic goals and feasible ways of achieving them. Typical program goals include:

- **Maximizing public participation.** By maximizing participation in the HHW program, the quantity of hazardous materials will be reduced in both the solid waste stream and the wastewater stream. Greater participation will mean higher costs for the community in the short run but will help avoid or reduce



costs associated with potential environmental cleanups. It will also help to prevent or minimize health and safety problems associated with improper HHW storage and handling in homes.

■ **maximizing the reuse and recycling of HHW.** By maximizing reuse and recycling, program sponsors will minimize their hazardous waste disposal costs and will conserve natural and financial resources. Collecting products such as paint for reuse and recycling,

however, might result in higher labor costs (e.g., for paint consolidation). In addition, communities will have to locate and secure markets for the materials.

■ **Removing from homes those wastes considered most hazardous.** Instead of collecting all wastes, some communities might want to collect specific wastes that they consider to present an unacceptable risk or to be a likely source of environmental contamination, such as oil-based paint and used motor oil. It might be difficult, however, to educate people to bring only those wastes to the collection. In addition, environmental, health, and safety problems could result from uncollected wastes in the community.

■ **Educating the public about reducing generation of HHW.** Some program sponsors might want to establish a HHW program to provide information to consumers about proper HHW management and alternative ways to reduce generation of HHW. No matter how effective education is, however, collection programs will still be needed for wastes for which there are no alternatives (such as car batteries) and for existing HHW stored in homes.

Identifying goals will help collection program organizers determine the basic type of collection program (e.g., periodic drop-off, curbside, or permanent), the amount of funding needed to collect and manage the wastes and to educate the community about the program, and the waste management practices that the program will use.